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The Unwelcome Visitor.—See page 47.

THE LITTLE FOX:

STORY OF CAPTAIN SIR F. L. MCLIN-
LOCK'S ARCTIC EXPEDITION.

WRITTEN FOR THE YOUNG.

BY S. T. C.,

ILLUSTRATIONS FOR "THE LITTLE FOX," "WAGGIE AND WAGGIE," &c.

NEW YORK:

W. W. DODD, 506 BROADWAY.

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P R E F A C E.

WITH the kind permission of Sir F. L. M'Clin-
tock, to whom my sincere acknowledgments are
due, I have endeavoured in this little book to
present to children, in a short and simple form,
the wonderful narrative contained in his valu-
able Journal.

I have also to express my thanks to Lady
Franklin for information very kindly and readily
furnished.

S. T. C.

THE LITTLE FOX.

CHAPTER I.

THE FOX.

I DARE say, my dear young friends, when you read the title heading these pages, you will think that you are going to hear of some wonderful doings performed by that crafty animal, the fox. But if you do, and really wish it, you will be disappointed; for I am going to tell you about something that never breathed, and yet has been of more

use than many living things or persons. I mean a little vessel named the "Fox." Perhaps you would like me to call her a ship, only she is a great deal too small for a real ship. I wish you could see her, as I have done, lying in Southampton Docks, not far away from the "Adriatic," an immense iron steamship, which helped some years ago to carry soldiers to the Crimea. If you did, you would wonder such a tiny vessel could have braved the perils and dangers I am about to tell you of.

Many years ago, several brave clever gentlemen were anxious and

determined, if possible, to discover a North-West Passage, or way of communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Those of you, my young readers, who have map books, and are old enough to use them, had better turn to your map of the World, and then you will understand easily what a North-West Passage means. You will see that the only way known, in those brave men's time, of passing from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean was by sailing round South America in a south-west direction, or round Africa and Asia, or Australia, in a south-east direction; whilst, looking to the north of

your map, you would quickly discover how much nearer it would be to get from one ocean to the other, if any passage were practicable along the northern coast of North America. But as you look, you will see an immense white blank, with only a name here and there; and you know that those blank spaces on your maps, wherever they may be, mean, unknown to us; but where there is a name, it proves some persons have been there, and the place is generally called after one of those persons. Now, in that great white space, are seas, straits, and islands; but they are nearly all covered with

snow or ice. The water has great mountains of ice rising out of it, some floating about, others stationary—they are called icebergs. In many parts it is frozen over for miles and miles, whilst the land is white with snow. ✓

In those places where the natives are found wandering about, they often build their huts of snow or ice. Only think of living in an ice house! How would you like it? And yet many of our brave countrymen have done so; and, what is more, had to build them, when they were tired after a hard day's work, before they could go to rest for the night. By-

and-bye, I shall tell you how they made their houses, and how long it took them to build one. And now, before I begin my story of the "Fox," I must say a few more words about the North-West Passage. Ever since the 15th century, there have been brave men interested in the matter; the earliest we believe to have been John Cabot, who lived towards the end of the 15th century, and was doubtless one of the three sons of the great navigator, Sebastian Cabot, who obtained letters patent from Henry VIII. for himself and sons, empowering them to discover unknown lands, and conquer them.

Since his time, until the adventurous journey of the little "Fox," commanded by Captain M'Clintock, there have been about 130 expeditions to the Arctic regions; but of their several successes I am not going to tell you, excepting two—the one commanded by Sir John Franklin, and the last by Captain (now Sir F. L.) M'Clintock. When you are old enough, you will be able to read for yourselves about the various expeditions, and their several results.

In June, 1845, two of Her Majesty's ships, the "Erebus" and "Terror," left England, commanded

by Sir John Franklin and Captain Crozier, with full purpose to discover the North-West Passage: the number of individuals on board the ships being 129. Accounts were received of the expedition dated up to July, 1845; after that month a solemn silence covered their proceedings. Year after year passed by, but no tidings reached the anxious friends and relatives of those 129 men. Lady Franklin and the English and American Governments sent out vessels in search of the missing ships and their crews, but all in vain; the only intelligence they could glean was, that the "Ere-

bus" and "Terror" passed their first winter at Beechey Island, and had departed without leaving any record behind them to say in what direction they were going. Think, my dear young friends, what a trouble it must have been to the relations of the missing men, when year after year went by, and no tidings came of their husbands, sons, fathers, and brothers. What would you feel if your dear papa, when he kissed you in the morning, and said he hoped soon to be back to you again, never returned? The first year he was away, would you not wonder whether he would

see you much grown, and whether he would know you when he came home? And would you not try to be good, and get on with your learning, against he came back? But if he never came—if you never heard his dear voice again—how sad! how very sad would you be! And when you saw your kind mamma look pale, and seem to love you more, and weep when no letters came, and she could read nothing in the newspapers about the absent vessels, would you not be glad and thankful to the good people who would risk their lives to go in search of your dear father? Yes,

I am sure you would ; and would never, no, never forget them. And so you ought—and so we all ought—and pray God to 'bless them night and day for their love and bravery. Now, then, for my story of the little "Fox." In 1854, Lady Franklin (nine years after her husband sailed from England) heard through Dr. Rae, a celebrated traveller in North America, that the Esquimaux of Boothia had seen several white men upon the coast of King William Land, about 40 in number, going towards the great Fish river. Her ladyship immediately determined to try once more,

and see if any of her countrymen and friends could be rescued from their dreadful fate. Dreadful I say ; for you must remember that they would be (if still alive) wandering in a land of snow and ice, where, in the summer, only here and there bits of green were to be seen ; where the sun, however brightly it shone, never thoroughly thawed the frozen seas and rivers, and in the winter disappeared entirely—generally from the end of October until the end of January ; and where the hardy Esquimaux could not exist, but travelled southward after the reindeer and other animals

used by them for food. It was not, however, until 1857 that Lady Franklin and her friends were able to carry out their noble desire. In April, 1857, Lady Franklin purchased the "Fox" for the purpose of exploring the Arctic regions, and Captain M'Clintock accepted her command. But the tiny vessel had to undergo many alterations before she could be fitted to contend with those ice-bound seas. She had been built for a gentleman to sail about in for pleasure, and not to brave dangers. Her beautiful velvet hangings had to be taken down, her skylights and ladder-

ways reduced, and the whole vessel sheathed with stout planking; both externally and internally, she had to be fortified and strengthened.

On the 2nd of July, 1857, the "Fox" left Aberdeen; she was to have sailed on the 1st, but by some mischance was delayed. The devoted Lady Franklin, with her niece, went on board the last day of June, to bid her brave friends goodbye; and with heartfelt farewells, and hopes for success, they parted—her ladyship to pray for a blessing on the undertaking on land, and her sailor friends to prove what hearts filled with love to God and man can

effect in the midst of frozen seas. The "Fox" left Aberdeen with 25 persons on board; but a few days after she sailed, Captain M'Clintock found one of the crew showed symptoms of bad lungs, so he sent him back by a homeward-bound vessel, and continued the journey with only 24. I dare say you will like to know what the offices of the 24 individuals would be? Well, then, first of all, there was their commander, Captain M'Clintock; then a lieutenant, W. R. Hobson; a volunteer captain, Allen W. Young; a surgeon and naturalist, David Walker, M.D.; an engineer, George

Brands; and an interpreter, Carl Petersen; a ship's steward, two quartermasters, boatswain's mate, carpenter's mate, two seamen, leading stoker, sailmaker, captain of hold, two stokers, three carpenters, dog driver, and the officers' steward. Then, the stores of the "Fox" consisted of preserved meat, vegetables, pickles, biscuits, lemon juice, Allsopp's ale, and flour, in sufficient quantities to last the ship's company two years and four months. Government gave the expedition large supplies of gunpowder, shot, rockets, and fire-arms; and the Admiralty provided them with requisites for

an ice voyage, such as saws, and ice anchors. Such saws! from ten to eighteen feet in length; with such teeth! I think I never beheld such great saws, before or since, as those which were on board the "Fox" when I visited her at Southampton, after her return from the Arctic Ocean.

Eighteen days after the "Fox" left Aberdeen, she reached Greenland, where Captain M'Clintock took on board coal, codfish, and some game, and with these supplies she again started on her way to the Island of Disco, where dogs were to be purchased for drawing sledges

when the crew should reach Arctic lands. At Godhavn, in Disco, Captain M'Clintock procured some dogs, and a native to manage them ; his name was Christian, and a very good fellow he proved to be. But Christian was an Esquimaux, and the Esquimaux are not famous for cleanliness ; so before the sailors would let him take his place amongst them, they gave him a thorough good washing, using plenty of soap and water to effect their purpose. They then dressed him like themselves, and cut his hair, which so improved his appearance that, when he next went on shore, his friends and neigh-

bours were delighted with his looks, and did nothing but admire him. Having taken more coal on board at Waigat, the "Fox" proceeded to Upernivik, that the Captain might purchase more dogs, and land the last letters to be forwarded to England from her brave crew for at least a year.

On the 6th of August, the "Fox" left Upernivik, and, after a short sail, was fairly out at sea, and the day following encountered several icebergs. And now the real voyage began; for now the little "Fox" and her company were certain to meet with perils and difficulties on every

side—adverse winds, blinding fogs, and ice, whichever way they turned. But these brave men were not to be discouraged; they had left their homes with one purpose in view, and to effect that purpose they were willing to suffer, and even to die, if necessary. When obliged to come to anchor, from being surrounded by ice, or seeing no open way to proceed on their journey, they did not fret and worry each other with useless complainings; but the officers encouraged the men to amuse themselves, and every evening the sailors played rounders on the ice, whilst the Dane and Esquimaux (Petersen

and Christian) spent their time in looking out for seals, the liver of which, if in good condition, was fried and eaten by the crew with bacon, the dogs being fed with the other parts of them.

Of course the company would much rather have been going forward (however hard they might have to work) than so often remaining quite still and useless; and you can guess what efforts they made to go on; when I tell you that one day they worked thirteen hours incessantly; and how far do you think they got on their way? Why, only one mile and a half. You must recollect they

had often to saw through or break the ice before they could move their little vessel at all; then they had to steer her between immense pieces called floes, not knowing a moment but some of the larger blocks might close round her and crush her to pieces; and often, very often, they could not move her at all, but had to wait until a change of wind or tide would loosen the ice packs by which they were enclosed. Towards the end of August, Captain M'Clin-tock began to fear that they should have to winter where they then were, in Melville Bay, the contrary winds preventing any favourable

movement of the ice; and not having sufficient manual or steam-power on board their little vessel, they could not force their way through it into clearer water. But he kept his fears to himself, employing his men by day in preparing tents, sledges, and gear for travelling; whilst in the evening they amused themselves with foot races and games upon the ice. In September, the Captain's fear became a certainty, and he and the rest of the crew set about making preparations for their winter sojourn. Petersen and Christian continued seal catching, that stores might be laid up for the dogs; and,

indeed, everything eatable that could be caught, or shot, was secured for future use. Music was also cultivated by its lovers; but I think, from the Captain's allusion to it, that the performers, like many of my young readers, were fonder of noise than melody—considering the louder the noise, the better the fun. The crew were very happy and light-hearted, as sailors generally are; and Petersen was a constant source of amusement to all parties. He had sailed so often in those parts, that he knew all about them, and his knowledge was most valuable to his employers; whilst he could tell no end of stories

to amuse his companions. I am sure you will all agree with me, that a good story-teller is a capital person to meet with on a long winter evening, even in our own dear country, as we sit by a blazing fire, with all our friends about us. But just fancy the "Fox's" crew on board their tiny vessel, with no sun by day and no bright fires, but little black iron stoves to give them warmth, whilst outside their abode was nothing but ice and snow, and knowing there was no chance of being released from their captivity for six or seven months at the least; and then think what a delightful thing it must have

been to have had the good-tempered Peterson on board, telling them all sorts of wonderful stories about whales, sharks, seals, ravens, dogs, ice, icebergs, and Esquimaux. One can picture the men huddled together to keep themselves warm, clapping their hands, and roaring with laughter, as Petersen mimicked and chattered in his broken English ; and feel glad that they had some one to amuse them, and divert their minds from thinking too much of their absent homes. But of their winter, and the way they spent it, I shall try to tell you in my next chapter. There is one thing, however, I want

you to keep in mind, and it is, that though I have really seen the "Fox," and talked with one of her crew, yet for the incidents of my story I am indebted to the kind gentlemen (especially Sir F. L. M'Clintock) who have given to the public an account of their perilous adventures in Arctic seas. And I hope you will like my book so well, that you will long to be old enough to read those written by the brave men who speak of what they have really seen, and not of what they have heard or read.

CHAPTER II.

THE FOX SETTLED IN, AND MADE COMFORTABLE,
IN MELVILLE BAY.

No doubt you will wonder how the tiny little "Fox" could be made comfortable when fast fixed in the ice, with nothing near but great plains, or hillocks, of ice, and no prospect of anything better for so many months to come. But she really was settled in very nicely, through her Captain's forethought and the crew's industry. So you must try and picture her all banked up with snow outside, and covered

with snow inside, to keep out as much cold as possible; and if you can fancy her masts and rigging adorned with beautiful crystal icicles, glistening and radiant in all the colours of the rainbow, you will have an idea of the appearance of the "Fox" as she lay in Melville Bay, ornamented by nature, and cared for by man. But she was not quite alone in that expanse of ice, for near her was a great cask, in which the dogs lived, for the sailors would not let them remain on board when the "Fox" came to a standstill. Whenever they were surrounded with ice, out would go the cask, and out the dogs after it, though the

dogs evidently preferred being in the vessel, and took every opportunity of getting on deck. No sooner did the deck light happen to go out, than up would be the dogs, rushing round the deck in search of anything eatable, and out would be the sailors, with brooms, or whatever they could get hold of, chasing and driving them overboard again. Indeed, the frequent inroads of the dogs became an exciting theme of conversation between the officers and men; and the old quartermaster would declare that he could not turn his back but they would come in everywhere, like a pack of wolves.

Seeing they were not at all particular in their eating, I do not wonder the sailors waged constant warfare against the dogs' predatory visits, for they would devour anything they could get hold of. One day, Lieutenant Hobson, wishing to expedite a dog's departure from the "Fox," gave it a kick, and, in so doing, dropped his slipper. In an instant, doggie had pounced upon his prize, and bore it off in triumph, evidently delighted with his unexpected meal. The Esquimaux say the dogs will eat anything but ravens. Captain M'Clintock believes they will eat even these, when hungry, if they

can only catch them, for he saw one of his dogs, Harness Jack, devour one with great relish. I do not know if you have seen an Esquimaux dog. They are not quite two feet high, with thick furry coats, the hair in winter being from three to four inches long. They are very much like the wolves of northern countries, excepting their bushy tails, which they carry in a graceful curve over their backs, whilst the wolf hangs his down when running. They are of different colours—whitey, brindled, black, and dingy red; they do not bark as our dogs, but make a long melancholy howl,



more like the wolf; and though possessing tremendous appetites, it is wonderful on how little they subsist. They are invaluable to the Esquimaux, going hunting with them in the summer, and carrying their game, to the weight of thirty pounds each; and in the winter, yoked in numbers to sledges, they drag five or six persons at the rate of seven miles an hour. This dog is to the Esquimaux what the reindeer is to the Laplander; and though Captain M'Clintock's were very lazy and trying, it is probable they had not been properly trained for their work, and thus gave him unnecessary trouble.

We have been speaking of the "Fox," and her society without: we will now see about her arrangements for the winter, within. As soon as she was really settled in her winter quarters, Dr. Walker kindly opened an evening school, and had eight or nine pupils to instruct in reading, writing, and arithmetic, with other useful information most interesting to sailors, which must have considerably lessened the monotony of their lives; and Captain M'Clintock had a beautiful little barrel-organ unpacked, a present from the Prince Consort, the late much loved Prince Albert. It was a very lovely instru-

ment, and Christian, the Esquimaux, was never tired of turning the handle, regarding it with intense admiration; the men were also equally pleased with its sweet notes. We can suppose what real pleasure and comfort it must have given to the ship's company, when the wind was moaning around the "Fox," and the ice crashing and rumbling like heavy waggons, to go below deck and listen to their organ, or attend Dr. Walker's school; and we will hope that they often forgot they were ice-bound in Melville Bay in their agreeable resources below.

But whilst we hope for the best,

we must never forget the real hardships that brave little company had to pass through before they attained the purpose for which they had left their own land. We must remember that if they had a few happy resources in the "Fox," they had nothing without her; that for seven months they remained fast bound by ice, hearing all sorts of awful sounds, and bearing the most severe cold—cold so intense, that it was often 64 deg. below freezing point, and on the calmest day 33 deg. During their sojourn in Melville Bay, the crew constantly practised at building snow and ice huts, and so expert did

they become, that they could build a snow one in three-quarters of an hour. The ice took much longer, each block having to be cut out of the solid masses around them before it could be used for a hut. Except themselves and their dogs and a cat, they seldom saw a living thing. Messmate Pussy appears to have been a great favourite with the crew, and her loss was sorely lamented when, having one day ventured upon deck, the dogs spied her, and before she could retreat, pounced upon her and killed her.

As winter drew on, the flocks of birds, at first visible, all flew south-

wards; a stray bear occasionally drew near the vessel, and, attracting the notice of the dogs, brought dogs, officers, and men after him; but such an event was a very uncommon occurrence—a few foxes and dovebies (a small white bird) being the only living creatures to be seen for days and weeks together. Yet, in spite of all these drawbacks, Captain M'Clintock tells us his "crew were very cheerful and happy,"—proving, my dear young friends, the truth of the old saying, "The path of duty is the sure road to happiness." When the fifth of November came, the sailors had a

grand day, and enjoyed themselves very much as many of you do: they made a Guy Fawkes, and got up a procession, marching round the ship with it, with drum and gong. Extra grog was issued, and a plum-pudding given them, sent by Lady Franklin, with others for special occasions. In the evening the men blackened their faces, and dressed themselves most grotesquely; this, with their flaring torches, and yells, so frightened the dogs, that they ran away, and did not venture back again until the effigy had been burned, and the fireworks let off. Then the men were so full of fun, that, lessons being out of

the question, the Doctor gave them a holiday, and thus they made a day of it. I dare say many of you are thinking it would have been fine fun to have been with the crew of the "Fox" that fifth of November; and so it certainly would have been, had there been the opportunity of skating to land, and then popping into a train, which would soon whisk you back to your native place, where, by a nice warm fire, you would be able to relate to your parents, and brothers and sisters, the wonderful doings in Melville Bay. But seeing that the sailors had no blazing fires to sit by, no dear little tongues to

listen to, and not the slightest chance of communicating with civilized shores, I hope you feel very thankful that your lot was not cast amongst them, and admire them the more for trying to make the best of circumstances whilst enduring such hardships so far away from home.

I want you also to remember, that from the first of November until the end of January (the 28th), the sun never rose or set on those icy regions; and that the light in midday was so faint, that it was scarcely sufficient to enable the crew of the "Fox" to read ordinary sized print without difficulty and pain. However, when

the sun did make his first appearance above the horizon, they gave him a hearty welcome, and celebrated the event by hoisting their flags and partaking of extra good cheer in the evening. Christmas Day and New Year's Day were also duly commemorated on board the "Fox;" pastry, preserved fruits, vegetables, and plum-pudding appearing on the dinner tables;—so that, in the midst of frozen regions, they had similar fare to that of their friends at home, who, doubtless, were far more anxious about their welfare than they were themselves.

You can easily suppose what the

delight of the ship's company would be when a bear came in sight of their vessel, and how officers and men would be out of the ship in no time, giving chase to the unlucky beast; whilst the dogs would share in the pleasurable excitement. Besides, it was not only a pleasurable but a profitable pursuit; for could they but catch Bruin, they would have plenty of good food for the dogs for three weeks; but, unfortunately, they were seldom successful. Though several were fired at, only two were secured and brought safely on board the "Fox." Greenlanders are very fond of bears' flesh, but English

people never eat it unless short of fresh meat; they do not like its fishy flavour. The Arctic bear is much larger than the brown and black bear of Europe and America; some of them are from eleven to thirteen feet in length: they are quite white, except the tip of their noses and claws, which are jet black. They live in the summer in caverns in the ice, and are expert swimmers, swimming from one ice island to another; they are remarkably fond of their young, and will rather die than desert them. In the midst of the winter they bury themselves in the snow, or hide in caverns until the sun

appears, when they begin to prowl about once more. Their usual food consists of seals and fish ; but when on shore, they prey on hares and birds, and eat such berries and roots as they can find. They are very in-offensive, only attacking the natives in self-defence. The Arctic bears are great thieves, never failing to rob an Esquimaux cache if they can meet with one. These caches are made of heaps of loose stones, under which the Exquimaux hide their store of seals' flesh, blubber, and other valuables, whilst wandering from place to place in search of more. Mr. Bruin is a capital seal-catcher, and seldom

lets one escape after he has set his mind upon it. He silently approaches his prey, until he comes within a short distance of where the seal is lying; then he dives under the water, and comes up at the very spot where his victim is basking in fancied security. But though Mr. Bruin is so expert in fishing for himself, yet he keeps a sharp look-out upon other seal-catchers, and takes great interest in their nets, helping himself very frequently in an unexpected and inopportune manner, as you will see by the following anecdote, which is in Captain M'Clintock's journal:—

“One dreary day, two men went to visit their nets, hoping to discover seals in them; one had just spied a very fine seal in his net, and was kneeling down upon the ice trying to disentangle it, when he felt some one give him a tap on his back. Thinking it was his comrade, he continued his occupation without taking any notice, when a second and heavier blow made him look up, and to his horror he saw a grim old bear standing by his side instead of his companion. Without touching the man, Bruin very composedly tore the seal from the net, and, in the coolest manner possible, set

about devouring his supper, in which process you might be quite sure the frightened man did not wish to disturb him, but slipped away as quickly as he could."

I dare say you would like to hear the names of Captain M'Clintock's dogs, and what they were like; and if I could tell you much about them I would. I find they had an old dog called Harness Jack, who was a sort of leader, or head of the dog establishment. This old fellow would not ever allow his harness to be taken off him, and, perched upon the top of the cask used as a kennel, kept the other dogs from disturbing the

young puppies, or rather from devouring them ; for I am sorry to say that some of the old dogs would not have scrupled to eat the young ones. Then there was Chummie, a great favourite of the Lieutenant's. I do not know whether he was the doggie who feasted off slipper ; but what I have read about him proves that however pleasant and interesting to men, he was anything but amiable to his companions. Having absented himself six days, and returning very hungry, he first gave his attention to a good meal, then recognised his favourites by rubbing against them, and finally attacked

the weakest of the doggie tribe, setting them all howling,—and with this discordant music ringing in his ears, he coiled himself very comfortably up, and settled in for a long nap. Besides Harness Jack and Chummie, there were Sultan, Mary, Omer Pasha, Old Sophy, Little Rose, Darkey, Missy, Foxey, and Dolly. The other dogs' names I cannot find out; but I expect, from their not having been noticed in the Captain's journal, that they did not signalize themselves for good or evil during their sojourn with the crew of the "Fox." Though the "Fox" appeared stationary, blocked up and

surrounded by ice, yet she really was not so, for she imperceptibly drifted during December sixty-seven miles towards the Atlantic. Captain M'Clintock considers it was the wind that influenced the movement of the vast continent of ice in which they were enclosed, rather than a submarine current.

Early in January, the ice in many parts began to break up, and several lanes of water appeared, which was quickly frozen over, preventing the old ice from re-uniting again. You can suppose how glad the ship's company were, when they saw these ruptures in the immense

surface of ice which had surrounded them ever since September; and when the sun appeared, after eighty-nine days' absence, with what delight they hailed his return. But with daylight came strange revelations, and they were able to realize their wonderful escapes from destruction, whilst ice-bound during the dark months, when they fancied all so still and safe, and learned that the very darkness which had been the source of so much temporary discomfort had been an effectual guard against over-much anxiety and constant fears.

In February, seals began to re-

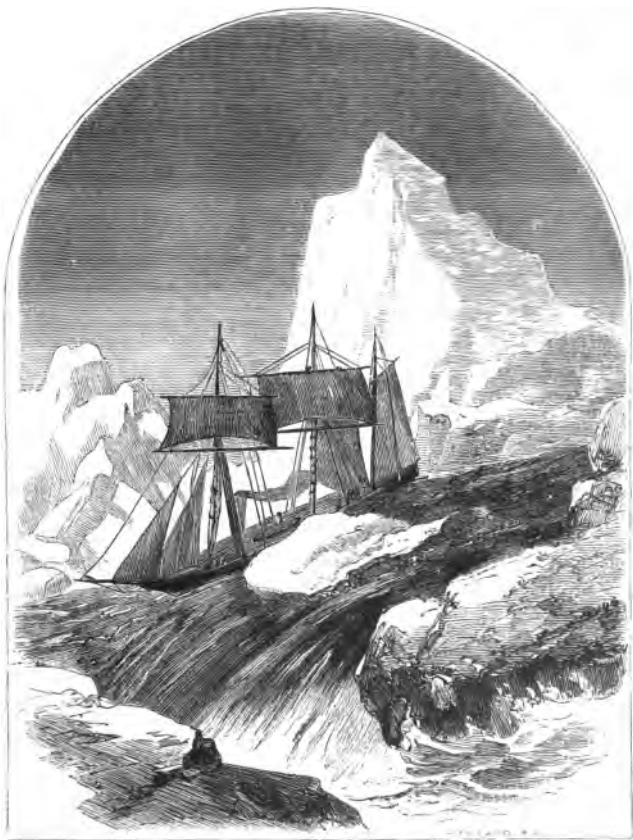
appear, and towards the end of the month one was shot, just in time to supply the dogs with food, their stock of seals' meat having been finished a few days before this one was caught. In March, more seals and dovekies were seen, and some were shot, and the breaking up of the ice began to make the "Fox's" little company look anxiously forward to being freed from their winter imprisonment. But as the ice broke up, their dangers increased on every side; and they ran a constant risk of losing their dear little vessel, the ice rubbing against her sides, and threatening to nip or

squeeze her to pieces. Indeed, in such imminent danger was she, that the crew had boats, sledges, knapsacks, and provisions all ready for a sudden departure; for they knew not a moment but their brave little vessel would be demolished. They were, however, mercifully preserved; and though the "Fox" had many hair-breadth escapes, yet she was safely brought through them all; and on April 12th, 1858, she drifted out of the Arctic regions, undamaged by seven months' stay in the frigid zone.

Though brought safely through so many dangers, the Captain and his

crew were somewhat disappointed at finding they had drifted homeward, rather than towards the destined field for their investigations. But they were nothing daunted, and determined, with God's blessing, to try again, and this time they trusted with better success. Captain M'Clin-tock decided to return to Disco, for water and supplies, when the ice should permit them; but for that opportunity they had to wait two or three weeks longer, and to pass through many and great perils before they could do so. Twice the ice separated, leaving the vessel in water, and cutting off the poor dogs

from their masters. The poor creatures howled piteously at being left in the lurch, and some of the crew went in a boat to fetch them; but five of the dogs would not be caught the last time, and were unfortunately obliged to be left behind on the ice. But the most serious time with the "Fox" was when the ice was all broken up into pieces called floes, and she had to steer between them, her crew every moment expecting she would be crushed or swamped. Had she been a large vessel, the danger would have been less, as she would have been better able to contend with her icy opponents; but



The Fox in the Ice.—Page 56.

the God who had so marvellously cared for the little ship and her crew through her long imprisonment, brought them safely through all their perils, and they reached Holsteinborg on the 28th of April, having been ice-bound 242 days, and having drifted with the ice 1,194 geographical, or 1,385 statute miles during that time.

Of all who had left their homes the previous July for this arduous undertaking, only one had died during their long probation, and that was the engine-driver, Robert Scott; he had fallen down a hatchway in December, and had died

two days afterwards, from the injuries he received. The journal speaks of him as a serious, steady man; but though we believe for him "to die was gain," yet it was a sad miss to his companions, and must have been a great grief to his wife and little ones when they came to know it. He was buried by moonlight, in the ice, a grave having been dug by his comrades, and the Captain reading the burial service over the grave; there, in those ice-bound regions, they laid their friend and companion, assured that He who neither slumbers nor sleeps would preserve the mortal remains

unto immortality. Cannot you fancy, when Holsteinborg dawned upon the eyes of the crew of the little "Fox," how glad they were? Cannot you fancy that you hear them shout, "Land! land!" and cannot you picture the men below, rushing up upon deck at the cry, and feasting their eyes upon the pleasing sight? and how happy Petersen and Christian would be at the thought of meeting with relatives or friends once more? And do you think the crew of the "Fox" would be likely to forget for many months the day they first saw and stepped on shore, after so long an absence from land?

CHAPTER III.

THE LITTLE FOX TAKING A HOLIDAY OFF HOLSTEINBORG, DISCO, AND UPERNIVIK, BEFORE RETURNING TO POLAR REGIONS.

IF the crew of the "Fox" were glad when they sighted Holsteinborg, their joy was in no way lessened by the Greenlanders' reception of them. The Dance House was opened, and the sailors and Esquimaux ladies danced for many hours with the greatest vigour, old Harvey, the quartermaster, taking the lead in the orchestra, blowing upon his flute. There were two other performers in the musical line—a flute

blower and fiddle player—and we read that the three, perched at the top of the room, did their best to keep the spirits of their friends from flagging, by blowing and scraping with unremitting ardour.

The Esquimaux ladies did not patronise crinoline, so they took up very little room, and thus enabled more to dance than could have done if they had followed English or French fashions. The very dogs were allowed a holiday, and were brought on shore to feast on the carcasses of four whales, which opportunity they doubtless made the best of. Holsteinborg is a port on

the coast of Greenland; the Governor is a Dane, and so are the principal residents. The clergyman's wife was the only European in the settlement. This poor lady felt the cold of the climate intensely—so much so, that the people informed Captain M'Clintock that she was "blue with the cold." Only think how bad it must be to suffer so much from the severity of the weather. We laugh at each other when our noses are blue on a very cold winter day, but we should find it no laughing matter if we were blue all over, and had very small fires to keep ourselves warm by.

I think the poor lady must have been very delighted when a present of coals, "with Captain M'Clintock's compliments," arrived at her door, and she must have considered him a very kind, generous man. What think you?

I forgot to tell you that Christian was the admiration of the Esquimaux ladies at the Dance House; his shiny fat face, beaming with good temper, and his neat sailor's dress, making him quite a point of attraction. Indeed, such were his charms in the eyes of one young girl, that she promised to marry him when he should return to his

native land, his engagement with the "Fox" being ended. Christian was very anxious that she should be taken on board the "Fox," and left at Godhavn with his mother until his return home ; but Captain M'Clintock told him it was better she should remain with her own mother and friends until he came back, and then he could go and fetch her. I do not know whether Christian kept his promise to the young girl, but I hope he did. The eight or ten days that the "Fox" anchored off Holsteinborg must have slipped rapidly by with its light-hearted crew, especially Peter-

sen and Christian; but we do not read that they repented of their engagement with the Captain, or that there was any reluctance evinced when they parted with the friendly Greenlanders (or Esquimaux). Stores of water, codfish, and some wild fowl had to be taken on board, and letters were written, and left to be forwarded to England; but these matters were soon completed, and then the "Fox" started for Disco.

On account of ice, snow storms, and fog, the crew were for many days unable to land at Godhavn; indeed, after much waiting, and

several failures, they had to give up reaching Godhavn by the usual port, it was so blocked up with ice, and they anchored the "Fox" in Upernivik Bay. Though so ice-bound off shore, yet they found it quite warm and pleasant on shore; and when the officers called on the Government Inspector, they were received by his wife, in a bright sunny room, without a fire, and with geraniums and other European flowers in full bloom in the window. What a pleasure it must have been to those gentlemen once more to meet with persons of their own rank and education, and, during their brief stay at

Godhavn, to participate in the comforts and elegancies of home. Here they obtained newspapers and other tidings of what was passing in the world from which they had been separated so many months, and they appear to have enjoyed themselves much. Before starting from Godhavn they hired another Esquimaux; his name was Samuel, and he took on board the "Fox" with him, his rifle, sledge, and kayak. A kayak is a slight boat the Esquimaux carry about with them when seal-hunting. They are very light, and only large enough to carry their possessor, who sits in the centre of his boat with his

sealskin dress attached to it; so that the man and boat appear all one in the water. When on shore, the Esquimaux carries his kayak at his back, or on his head. Though we have said so much about seals, I have not yet described them to you. The seal resembles a quadruped in some respects, and a fish in others. The head is round and rather flat—very much like a dog's, with the same intelligent, mild look. It has large whiskers, a broad nose, and great sparkling black eyes. The seal has no external ears, but it has an internal orifice in the head, which answers the purpose for conveying

sound, and which, like the nostrils, can be closed at its will, so as to keep out water. The skin is covered with stiff glossy hair; and its fore paws, which, but for its sharp claws, much more resemble fins than feet, are encased in a thick membrane, with which it paddles or swims about in the water. The hinder limbs are directed backward; so that the seal appears to have but two legs, or limbs—the back ones being lost in the tail. They live in herds, but are easily tamed, and become attached to their keepers; the young are docile, and obedient to the voice of their dams, and assist each other

when in distress. The seal is of migratory habits, and feeds on fish, crabs, and sea birds, which they surprise and catch whilst swimming.

It is of the greatest importance to the Esquimaux; the flesh they eat, the oil is consumed in lamps, and the skin is used for clothing and coverings of tents. A seal yields a large quantity of oil when fat or full grown—from five to twelve gallons each. The seal fishery has latterly become a profitable, though dangerous trade, and several large vessels are sent out every season from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia in of them.

We left the little “Fox” anchored in Upervivik Bay, off Disco, the officers enjoying the society of kind friends at Godhavn. You will see by your map-books, that Disco (or Diskoe, as it is sometimes spelt) is an island off Greenland; its principal settlement being Godhavn, or Lieveley. Waigat is another island, but very much smaller than Disco; it has coal-fields, where vessels take in supplies. Upervivik is on the coast of Greenland, north of the island of Disco. All the colonies in Greenland are subject to Danish laws, though the Esquimaux pride themselves on being independent of them:

but they are very much attached to the Danes, who are most kind and considerate to these improvident people. At each of the Danish settlements is a clergyman, doctor, and schoolmaster, who are paid by Government to instruct and relieve the natives. Such a provision is a great boon for these poor people, who often, in the winter, would suffer most severely but for the friendly aid of their thoughtful benefactors, who never fail to issue food to them, free of cost, in times of scarcity. Many of the Esquimaux who frequent these stations have become Christians, and can read and write tolerably well.

In a few days, Captain M'Clin-tock had completed his small necessary purchases, and the ship's company having interchanged presents with their Danish friends, and bidden them farewell, left Godhavn, and sailed for Waigat Straits to take in coal. Fortunately, they met with a party of seal-hunters, who were returning from the chase, and who were induced to help the sailors lade their vessel with coal, which of course was a great assistance to them, enabling them to complete the coaling business more speedily than they had anticipated. On the 28th of April the crew of the little

“Fox” first sighted Holsteinborg, and on the 28th of May she was again ready to proceed on her adventurous voyage. No doubt the sailors had much enjoyed the short holiday which they had been obliged to take for refitting and supplying the wants of the “Fox,” but we find, to a man, they were all anxious to start afresh, and try to unravel the fearful mystery, or silence, which covered the proceedings and fate of their brave missing countrymen. Seven months’ imprisonment in the regions of ice, with only one month’s relaxation amongst human kind, had not in the least abated their ardour

or lessened this desire. On! on! was their watchword, and "Try again" their heart's language, under every disappointment and discouragement.

Having arrived in sight of Upernivik on the last day of May, they were obliged to anchor to an iceberg, being unable to proceed further northward for two days, on account of the ice, which they could not penetrate. During their stay they met with much kindness from the captains of two whalers, who were detained by the ice like themselves. These gentlemen supplied them with several things they much

needed, and which they could not obtain from their Danish and Greenland friends; and before they bade adieu to the iceberg, they were fortunate enough to get a lot of newspapers from a Scotch steamer, which arrived at Upernivik just before they were able to start. On the 4th of June the little "Fox" steamed away slowly, betwixt islands and ice, for about thirty miles. Captain M'Clintock says these little islands are called Woman Islands, and were discovered in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. They gained their name from the fact, that when John Davis, a celebrated Arctic

explorer in those days, visited these islands, he could only find a few old women upon them; all the men and active women having taken fright and hidden themselves, or made their escape. Which would you rather have been—the poor old women, or the cowardly men and young people? Steering cautiously between ice and islands, the little “Fox” made her way through the frozen ocean. Once she was nearly wrecked, from having suddenly struck upon a rock, which, being covered with ice, was not distinguishable from the immense floating masses around, until too late to

be avoided. The poor little vessel's bow stuck fast, and, as the tide fell, points of the reef held her tight; the water almost reached to her after-hatchway, and the least movement would have caused her to turn on her side, when she would have filled instantly, and sunk. In this fearful and anxious state the crew remained until the tide rose again; and, after eleven hours of dreadful suspense, the dear little "Fox" floated off once more. There were several whalers within signal distance, so the lives of the crew were not endangered; but it was their good little vessel they were

in such apprehension about. After such a narrow escape, we cannot think any longer of the "Fox" as taking her ease and pleasure, but must again watch her braving the perils of the Arctic seas, and pressing nobly forward, to the realization of her crew's ardent desire and hopes.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FOX ONCE MORE IN MELVILLE BAY, AND
WHAT SHE DID WHEN SHE GOT THERE.

IN the middle of June the little "Fox" once more lay in Melville Bay, watching opportunities to thread her way between the immense fields of ice with which it was covered. Her crew amused themselves by seal and rotchie shooting.

Rotchies, or little auks, are small birds peculiar to northern climes:—they are about nine inches long; the crown of the head and upper part of the plumage are black, the cheeks and under part of the bird white.

When the ice has been broken up by storms, they descend in innumerable numbers to feast upon the marine animals which are scattered about. There is a species of auk which frequents Ireland and the rocky cliffs of Britain; they assemble early in April, but migrate regularly to France or Spain towards the end of August. The Arctic auk lays her single egg upon the ledges of inaccessible rocks, the other species in a hole in the ground dug out and formed by herself and mate, or in rabbit burrows, after having driven out the poor little rabbits—which people say the two birds

easily do by fluttering their wings and pecking the frightened creature, who gladly makes his escape, leaving them his abode in peace and comfort.

Some days the "Fox" would be able to proceed upon her way for a few miles without hindrance, when suddenly she would be brought to a standstill, and have to remain where she was until another movement in the ice would enable her again to go on. Such delays must have been very harassing to the little company who were longing to solve the sad enigma of their missing countrymen's fate, and the Captain's anxiety to get

on was, consequently, painfully increased by so many discouragements. So much depended upon their reaching Pond's Bay early in the season, that every impediment became a serious cause of vexation; for it was not until they had fairly gained that point, that they would have any chance of prosecuting their westward search after Sir John Franklin's ships. But whilst ice-bound, they made the best of their guns, powder, and shot; for we read that nearly a thousand rotchies were shot, and that when cooked they were capital eating. They also managed to kill a young bear

whose curiosity had led him to reconnoitre the ship, and who paid the penalty of his inquisitiveness by his life; so, whilst the crew fed upon rotchies, the dogs were regaled upon bear, and doubtless were equally pleased with their change of diet. As the "Fox" neared Cape York, some of the sailors observed several Esquimaux running on the land ice; and the Captain having the vessel stopped for a short time, eight men came on board. They all knew Petersen, having seen him when he was with Dr. Kane's expedition. The Esquimaux are very harmless; they are short of stature,

and small but well made. When divested of dirt and grease, their complexion is that of a dark brunette, and might, even in Europe, be reckoned handsome. The face is broad and flat, and the nose so small and sunk into the cheeks, that, with many, a ruler might be laid across the face without touching it; their hair is long, black, and coarse, and their strange wild costume picturesque. The Esquimaux dresses are made of bear or sealskin; the women's are so constructed that they carry their babies under their sealskin frock, and when they want to get at them, they pull them out

over their shoulder. It looks very funny to see an Esquimaux woman with her baby's head peeping out of its mother's fur dress; but it must be nice and warm for the poor little thing. The Esquimaux wander about all the summer in the northern part of Arctic lands, and return toward the south as winter sets in. Indeed, most living things in those bitterly cold regions migrate southward as the winter comes on, disappearing with the sun. Captain M'Clintock distributed presents of knives and needles to the eight men who came on board his vessel, and made Petersen explain to them that

the reason he gave the articles to them was because they were kind, and behaved well to white people.

Having parted with the Esquimaux, the little "Fox" again pursued her way northwards, but was several times delayed by huge masses of ice obstructing her course; once she was so severely nipped that her screw shaft was bent, and a portion of her screw broken off. Whilst detained by the ice, officers and crew made the most of their time in shooting rotchies, and gathering their eggs when they could get upon the rocks to search for them. At one place where they landed, they

obtained some red snow; they describe the colour as very much the shade of a port wine stain. Red snow has been considered by some naturalists to be a vegetable production, growing upon limestone rocks, moss, dead leaves, and sometimes on the bare soil;—others say it is of animalcular origin. It was first brought from the Arctic regions by Captains Ross and Parry; it is not at all common, and Captain M'Clin-tock says "they had to seek diligently for it," before they could get some specimens.

It was not until the 27th of July that the "Fox" reached Pond's

Bay, and her crew meeting with a whaler, the "Diana," sent their letter-bags on board for England, and made fast their little vessel to some land ice. Whilst staying off Button Point, Captain M'Clintock and Petersen used all their power of persuasion and gifts to keep an old woman and her boy in good temper whilst they questioned them about ships and white people. The old woman was ignorant, or pretended to be, of any knowledge of white men or wrecked vessels on the coast. She accounted for being alone with the boy, from her having stayed to barter with the whalers, and the ice

having broken up, she was unable to join her tribe, who were only 25 miles off. Her story being very unsatisfactory, Captain M'Clintock determined to visit her countrymen's summer village, accompanied by Petersen and a man. They started for their investigation with a sledge and boat, but were unable to reach the encampment in consequence of a range of precipitous cliffs rising from the sea, which cut off all communication with the land on the other side of the cliffs. Like the bears, they were of an inquisitive turn of mind, and examined all the caches they met with ; but did not,

like Mr. Bruin, appropriate their contents; they simply investigated these hiding-places, hoping to discover bits of iron, or articles that would give a clue to the missing vessels. But they found nothing to reward them for their trouble, the caches only containing sealskins, birdskins, walrus and other bones, whalebone, blubber, and in one a small sledge, "made of wood and large bones, secured together with strips of whalebone."

Whilst the Captain was absent, shooting parties were twice made to a loomery upon Cape Graham Moore, and each time they brought

on board 300 looms. Looms, willocks, or guillemots are very much like rotchies, but are more numerous spread over temperate climates, as well as colder ones. They are about the size of an English duck; they lay their eggs in the fissures of rocks; the eggs are of an olive-brown colour. At the report of a gun the air is quite darkened by the frightened looms, who fly upwards all at once from the rocks upon which they have been resting, and four or five usually come down at one shot.

When the "Fox" next started on her way, Captain M'Clintock took

the old woman and boy on board as pilots, wishing to see their friends. She said she recollected there was a wreck on the coast when she was a girl, and they found a piece of English oak near her abode, and that, a long time ago, a ship stopped a whole winter at a place about seven miles from there, and that one of the crew died, and was buried there. This information made the Captain anxious to see the Esquimaux of that locality, but he was unable to gain any satisfactory intelligence from them, though they talked freely with Petersen, Christian, and Samuel. They persisted

in saying neither wrecked vessels nor white men had been on their coast; and from their great lack of wood, their statement was probably correct. The land where these poor people pitched their summer tents was devoid of game, only yielding a moss, which they burned with blubber in their lamps. They were great beggars, as indeed all uncivilised tribes of Esquimaux are—needles, saws, and iron being little fortunes to them. But whilst the Captain and two or three of his crew were making sundry inquiries of the natives in their village, the poor little “Fox” had another nar-

row escape—the ice breaking away from her, and nearly forcing her on shore; but after immense exertion, she once more got clear of the drifting masses. The Esquimaux frequent these coasts in search of the seal and narwhal, whose skins, ivory, and blubber, they barter away with the more southerly tribes. The narwhal is called by some the sea unicorn; it differs from every other sort of whale, in having no teeth. It has a horn from six to ten feet long, projecting from the upper jaw in a direct line with the body; it is harder and whiter than ivory, for which article it was at one time

substituted. The narwhal is from twenty to thirty feet in length, from head to tail; the skin is dark on the back, but lighter on the sides, and white on the belly. Though very swift and strong, and armed with such a formidable weapon, it is remarkably peaceable, feeding on small kinds of fish and marine animals. It is caught with harpoons by the Esquimaux, who eat its flesh; the skin is quite smooth, and yields a considerable quantity of oil and blubber. With the ivory horn they make spears and various other implements.

When we speak of an Esqui-

maux encampment, or village, my young readers must not for one instant suppose that they are constructed like those in warmer climates. Sometimes the Esquimaux live in huts built of ice and snow, but more generally in tents, which they carry about with them; the upright supports of the tents being poles, or large bones from the whale and narwhal; the covering of the tent is sealskin, dressed in a manner peculiar to themselves.

There are one or two chiefs in each settlement. A chief is permitted to have two wives, the other Esquimaux having only one. Of

course their worship is heathen, unless amongst the more southern tribes, who come in contact with the Danes, many of whom are Christians. Not being able to gain tidings of the missing ships from the natives at Pond's Bay, the little "Fox" again started on her perilous adventures; and after meeting with a fearful gale of wind, sleet, and rain, she arrived at Beechey Island on the 11th of August. Perhaps you will remember that it was at Beechey Island Sir John Franklin and the crews of the "Erebus" and "Terror" passed their first winter, leaving it in the spring to pursue

their north-western journey. Stores had been left at this island by the previous expeditions sent out by Government in search of the missing vessels. Captain M'Clin-tock examined these stores, and found the door of the store-house had been blown in by an easterly gale; and though some of the articles were damaged by the rain and thawed snow, everything appeared untouched by bears and foxes. Having helped himself to coal and a few other needful supplies, the Captain had the house and its roof thoroughly repaired; and after depositing a record of

his future proceedings, caused the door to be securely fastened. But before the "Fox" left Beechey Island, the Captain set up a monument to the memory of his missing countrymen, which had been sent to Godhavn by Lady Franklin. It was placed upon the centre of an older monument, to the memory of those who perished in the Government expedition under Sir Edward Belcher.

It must have been a trying time for the crew of the little "Fox," when they carried that memorial of a wife's devoted love, and set it up on the cenotaph erected to the

memory of those who had already died in the same cause for which they were perilling their own lives. For how knew they but others might come to that island, and raise another tablet to their memories in like manner? The inscription on Lady Franklin's tablet is—

TO THE MEMORY OF

FRANKLIN,

CROZIER, FITZJAMES,

AND ALL THEIR

GALLANT BROTHER OFFICERS AND FAITHFUL
COMPANIONS WHO HAVE SUFFERED AND PERISHED
IN THE CAUSE OF SCIENCE AND
THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY.

THIS TABLET

IS ERECTED NEAR THE SPOT WHERE
THEY PASSED THEIR FIRST ARCTIC
WINTER, AND WHENCE THEY ISSUED
FORTH TO CONQUER DIFFICULTIES OR
TO DIE.

IT COMMEMORATES THE GRIEF OF THEIR
ADMIRING COUNTRYMEN AND FRIENDS,
AND THE ANGUISH, SUBDUED BY FAITH,
OF HER WHO HAS LOST IN THE HEROIC
LEADER OF THE EXPEDITION THE MOST
DEVOTED AND AFFECTIONATE OF
HUSBANDS.

"AND SO HE BRINGETH THEM UNTO THE
HAVEN WHERE THEY WOULD BE."

1855.

Doubtless, as the ship's company returned from their melancholy task, they thought of their dear ones at home, and hoped that God would crown their efforts with success, and bring them safely back to their own firesides. But of this they must have been fully assured—that the same admiration and regret which had manifested itself for the characters of the departed, would be evinced towards them, should they be called to share in the same untimely and sad fate.

Beechey Island will be only marked on very modern map books (lat. $74^{\circ} 40'$ N. long. 92° W.); it lies .

between Lancaster Sound and Barrow Strait. On the 16th of August the "Fox" and her crew left Beechey Island, and, after stopping at Cape Hotham to inspect a small provision depot, proceeded for two or three days along Barrow Strait, having to contend with foul wind, sea, fog, and rain, until they got to the entrance of Peel Strait, when the weather very much improved. Captain M'Clintock writes thus of their steering down Peel Strait:—"All of us are in a wild state of excitement—a mingling of anxious hopes and fears!" But after hopefully running for 25 miles down the

Strait, they came in sight of unbroken ice, extending across it from shore to shore; and from the lateness of the season, and the strait continuing for 60 miles further on, the Captain considered there was no chance of navigating it that year, and steered immediately for Bellot Strait, hoping to pass through it, and thus gain the Western Sea discovered by Sir James Ross in 1849. Sorely disappointed, the crew turned their little vessel about in search of Bellot Strait, not quite sure that it really existed; and it was not until the 21st of August that they reached it. But alas! dis-

appointment awaited them there ; for they discovered, after passing some miles through the strait, that the western end, leading to the sea, was closely packed with ice. To the east all was clear, but to the west—the aim of all their hopes—it was hopelessly filled by packs of ice, heaped together and extending five miles before them. Anchoring the little “Fox” in Levesque Bay, the whole of her company landed to explore the new land. Captain Young and Petersen were fortunate enough to shoot some Brent-geese ; and the doctor, who was botanising, saw some reindeer, but not having

a gun, was obliged to let them give him the go-by without a shot. Brent-geese are smaller than common wild geese; the wings are also longer, and they travel greater distances; the head, neck, bill, and upper part of the breast, are black; the lower part of the breast, and under the wings, ash colour, with white round the tail; the long feathers of the tail and wings are also black. Captain M'Clintock describes the scenery at Levesque Bay as "not only grand, but beautiful," and says the craggy hill-sides were quite tinged with green. He thinks that the Esquimaux had

once summer residences there, from the remains that he observed whilst wandering on the shore. Petersen having shot an immense seal, weighing 500 lbs., the crew enjoyed a meal of its flesh, which, from sojourning so long in Arctic regions, they were beginning to relish. So much uncertainty surrounded their future, that Captain M'Clintock, whilst lingering in the vicinity of Bellôt Straits, hoping for some favourable movement of the ice, determined to send stores on shore, and form a depot, in case they should have to winter in that neighbourhood, so that they might

prosecute their investigations upon land, if unable to do so by sea. Rations were accordingly sent on shore at Stillwell Bay, 45 miles from Depot Bay, before returning to reconnoitre Bellot Straits.

Five times did Captain M'Clin-tock endeavour to pass through Bellot Strait, but each time unsuccessfully. This strait is about 20 miles in length, and runs nearly direct from east to west; on either side rise immense cliffs and rocks, some of them 1,500 or 1,600 feet high. The water was ascertained to be about 400 feet deep in the narrowest part of the strait, where

it is scarcely a mile wide. Finding there was no chance of going westward by the "Fox," Captain M'Clintock had her anchored in a little creek which he named Port Kennedy; and he and the officers continued daily investigating the neighbouring cliffs, endeavouring to discover breaks in them for sledge travelling, when Bellot Strait should be frozen over.

Whilst the officers of the "Fox" were narrowly inspecting the surrounding rocks, hills, and lands, the sailors amused themselves with rambling about, shooting whatever came in their way, which was little

enough, living creatures growing very scarce with the coming autumn season. A few seals, and one or two reindeer, were shot; also some peregrine falcons, which Petersen told the Captain were "the best beef in the country." Peregrine falcons are about 18 inches in length, and they are fine bold birds, with pale blue hooked bills tipped with black; the upper part of their body is of a bluish lead colour, with black bars; the tail is a dingy ash colour, spotted with brownish black; the breast is of a yellowish white, the centre of each feather being of a darker hue. They are general in

Europe and Asia, and are frequently found in the north of Scotland.

And now we have settled the little "Fox" for her second winter quarters in Arctic regions, the middle of September having arrived, waiting to be frozen up for the season, that her crew might prosecute their further search by land, their cry still being, "On on! to the West! to the West!"

CHAPTER V.

THE FOX WAITING IN PORT KENNEDY FOR THE FREEZING OVER OF BELLOT STRAIT.

PORT Kennedy is at the entrance of Bellot Strait; it was so named by Captain M'Clintock, after the gentleman who discovered Bellot Strait. I suppose most of my young readers know that a "port" is any safe sheltered place at the mouth of a river, or on the sea coast—with water deep enough for a ship of burden to enter, and where her cargo can be unloaded in security. At the entrance of Port Kennedy

are a number of small islands, now called "Fox Islands," after the tiny "Fox." In this safe little retreat the "Fox" awaited the freezing over of the neighbouring strait, that some of her company might prosecute their journey in sledges; and it was decided that the heavy part of her goods should be taken on land, and safely housed, to give the crew more room in her for the winter. One day, however, the Captain thought he would "try again," and see if he could get through Bellot Strait, but again was disappointed; and when he returned to Port Kennedy, after a day or two's

absence, he found his little harbour so blocked up with ice, that he could not run the "Fox" into it, and had to anchor her a quarter of a mile further out than he had intended. Then the men were employed in "unbending her sails, and laying up her engines," for neither would be of any use for many months to come. Provisions were sent on shore, sledges got in order, dogs fed up, and every preparation made for land journeys. There were to be three parties formed, each taking a different direction—one headed by Captain M'Clin-tock, another by Captain Young,

and the other by Lieutenant Hobson; the poor Doctor had to remain with the men on board the "Fox." No doubt he would have liked to go too, but his duty called him to take care of the crew; and duty often crosses inclination, though, in its right performance, we are sure to be made happy. Besides, he appears to have been very fond of investigating everything; so, I dare say, whilst the other officers were away, he dried his plants, for he was a botanist; experimentalized on metallic stones and ores, being a geologist; noted the atmospheric changes, watched the stars, phy-

sicked those who needed it, and fared better than his absent comrades, being able to creep into a warm bed every night, and sleep without fear of having his nose or fingers frost-bitten. So, after all, he doubtless made himself very comfortable, his only cause of anxiety being about those who were away.

It was calculated that the real land search after the missing crews could not commence until March; but, in the intermediate time, every preparation was to be made to facilitate the departure of the men. Provisions were forwarded for several miles on the destined route of

each party, and short journeys on foot and in sledges were taken, to investigate thoroughly the surrounding coasts. Waiting is always wearisome work, and so the little "Fox's" company found it to be. They so longed to be active, that the freezing over of the vast waters on every side seemed long and tedious. However, they did their best to beguile the time, and tried to shoot and catch every living creature they saw. Occasionally, they succeeded in shooting a reindeer, which was, indeed, a prize, affording them several meals of good fresh meat. These animals, they knew, were only wait-

ing, like themselves, for the ice to be strong enough to bear them, before they would migrate to the south, which made the sportsmen more anxious to lay in a stock of their flesh against their winter needs. Reindeer live in herds, and are inhabitants of the most northerly countries. They are from four feet and a half to five feet high, the Arctic reindeer being the largest sort. The reindeer have remarkably long slender branched antlers; their skins are brown on the back, and white under, though, when they are old, the hair sometimes assumes a greyish hue; the horns of the male are

much larger than those of the female. Reindeer have been domesticated by the Laplanders, and are the source of their wealth, a rich Laplander being one who owns a large number of reindeer. Its flesh supplies them with meat; with its milk they make cheese; and its skin helps to clothe them, forms their bedding, and covers their tents. The reindeer chiefly feed off moss, or a species of lichen found in cold countries, to obtain which they are obliged to migrate southward as snow and frosts set in.

By October the "Fox" was quite settled in for the winter, so that her

crew had to fall back upon their own resources for amusement or improvement; the men set traps in the crevices of the rocks to catch foxes, but the little ermines generally managed to eat the baits without being caught themselves. These pretty little creatures (whose skins, no doubt, you know very well, constantly seeing them in tippets and muffs) are a sort of stoat; indeed, a stoat is an ermine in summer dress, and an ermine is a stoat in a winter one. The reddish-brown coat of the stoat changes in winter, in cold climates, to white; so that they are all white but their tails, which are

always black. They are dreadful thieves, eating nearly anything they can meet with—such as rats, eggs, small birds, young rabbits, or any little animals. They are very fierce, and will not be tamed. Even when caught, and put in a cage, they still manifest the same desire to kill and injure whatever they can get at. These tiny creatures (for they are only from ten to thirteen inches in length) were sources of great amusement to the crew of the “Fox,” who vainly endeavoured to catch them. You can fancy what fun it would be to see five or six men rushing after one of these little animals ; and just

when they thought they had caught it, away it would dart, slipping under the snow, and reappearing some yards off; then there would be another rush with the men, and another dart with the ermine, until it had effected its escape, or they were fairly tired out with the chase; whilst their comrades and the officers, who would be looking on, would be roaring with laughter at them, and persuading them to have another hunt after the little skirmishers. I do not hear of any cask for the dogs this winter, but read that they slept on the off-side of the vessel, and that they were a very unamiable set.

Indeed, their delight appears to have been in domineering over and ill-treating the weaker members of their society. For instance, we read in Captain M'Clintock's journal, of a dog who had a propensity for gnawing her harness; and to prevent her gratifying her desire, she was muzzled by the sailors, when the dogs of the community, discovering her helplessness, attacked her so fiercely during the night, that she died from their ill-usage the next day. I do not think our dogs would have behaved so badly—do you?

As soon as the ice was sufficient-

ly strong to bear weights, two observatories were erected upon it, a short distance from the "Fox." One was built of square blocks of ice, and contained a declinometer, an instrument used for making atmospheric calculations and scientific observations; the other was constructed of snow, and was made by the Captain, Doctor, Engineer, and Interpreter, for magnetic purposes. In November the little company sustained a sad loss in the death of Mr. Brand, their engineer; this gentleman had been out on the ice the day before his death, apparently well, but was found dead by his

servant in the morning on the deck. He left a widow and three or four children to mourn his loss, when the melancholy tidings could be conveyed to them. His comrades dug a grave on shore for him, where he was buried, the Captain reading the burial service over the body, and having a headboard and inscription placed over his grave. It is sad to have an accustomed place unfilled by one we have long been used to see in it; but how much sadder must it have been on board the little "Fox" to have had another of their small number taken from them. The previous winter,

the gap had been amongst the hands; this time it was amongst the officers; so that at each of their tables there was now a missing face. To add to their loss, there was no one left to work the engines; for the two stokers not understanding machinery, Mr. Brand had had to work them ever since Robert Scott's death. No wonder that, for a time, a gloom would overhang the little company, and they would look forward with more anxiety to spring, when renewed efforts after their great object would dispel these melancholy feelings. 1858 passed away, and 1859 began, without anything

particular occurring, either to crew or vessel. Christmas-day and New Year's-day were celebrated with due honours—venison superseding roast-beef, which was not come-at-able. Animals and birds were seldom seen; occasionally a few ptarmigan were shot, but very seldom; and once in a way a blue or sooty fox was entrapped, but that was quite an event in their lives. Ptarmigans, or white grouse, are only found in cold countries; in the summer they have mottled-brown, or ash-coloured plumage, but in the winter it becomes pure white. They are about fifteen inches long. The

ptarmigan fly in flocks, and are seldom found further south than the Highlands of Scotland—they are very good eating.

The Arctic foxes are white, and blue or sooty colour; they are rather smaller than the English fox, and their hair is longer. The Esquimaux catch them, for the sake of their skin, in traps or pits baited with fish; they are very inoffensive, and it is wonderful how they exist during the winter, when scarcely a living thing is to be seen. Petersen told Captain M'Clintock that he thought they laid up stores of eggs and other eatables in the summer,

for winter consumption ; for he had seen a fox in the winter scraping in the snow, and after a while he had got down at a cache of eggs, which he felt assured the cunning creature had hidden.

Day after day passed slowly by, the weather being very unfavourable, confining the crew to their little vessel very frequently for five days out of the seven. Anxious as they had been to be near Bellot Strait, they found it anything but a pleasant neighbourhood, for there was a dark gloomy mist continually blowing damp and cold through it ; but when the sun appeared once more, things

began to wear a brighter aspect, and active preparations were made for starting on their agreed routes. The dogs were well fed, seven being appointed to each team, the odd one—for there were 22—being given to the Captain, as his was likely to prove the longest journey. The 14th of February was fixed for the Captain to start, “accompanied by Mr. Petersen and Alexander Thompson, with two dog-sledges and fifteen dogs, dragging 24 days’ provision,” the object of the journey being to communicate with the Boothians. Captain Young was to proceed in another direction towards

Prince of Wales Land, and it was agreed that should either be absent longer than the 24 days, Lieutenant Hobson was to send a party in search of them.

Leaving the "Fox" ice-bound in Fort Kennedy, we must now follow her brave officers in their land investigations, which proved most favourable and cheering to the Captain and his party. After suffering intensely from cold and other hardships, they had begun, after nearly a fortnight's absence from their little vessel, to fear their journey would prove fruitless, when, on the 1st of March, they suddenly met with some

Esquimaux, and learnt that their village was but a few miles distant. Being too tired to accompany them to it, they hired the Esquimaux, at a needle each, to build them their ice hut every night. They had had to build their hut before they could take any rest, and it usually took them two hours to do so. Just fancy, when very tired, cold, and hungry, to have to build a place to shelter you in, ere you could venture to take any repose! The Esquimaux set to work, and in an hour completed a hut large enough for them all to sleep in. The next morning, after going with the natives

several miles, and not coming to their village, the Captain displayed his needles, knives, beads, and other articles for barter, and told them, if they could find and bring with them any articles belonging to the starved white men, he would buy them of them—for the evening before, they had said some white men were starved upon an island where they got wood and iron from. The next day all the people, little and large, came to the Captain, bringing various articles belonging to the lost expedition—silver spoons, forks, part of a gold chain, a medal, and various other things, which left no doubt as

to their ownership. These Esquimaux assured Petersen that they had never seen the white men, though one of them had seen their bones on the island they had mentioned. They said the white men's ship was crushed by the ice out in the sea, and that it had three masts. They were very friendly and good-humoured, but fearful beggars. One woman was so intent on getting all she could, that, to the Captain's horror, she dragged her baby out of her dress, and held it by the arm, perfectly naked, in the open air, 60 deg. below freezing, until he had given her a needle for it; which

needle, you may be perfectly sure, was speedily forthcoming when the surprised Captain understood what she wanted. With mingled feelings of joy and sorrow the Captain and his party must have retraced their steps to their little vessel, and recounted to their anxious company the tidings they had gathered from this wandering tribe.

They had gained a clue to their missing countrymen; but what a sad one! High-spirited, brave men as they were (for every soul on board the "Fox" had a hero's heart), those hearts must have beaten fast, and their breasts swelled with generous

yet sorrowful emotion, as they gazed upon and touched the melancholy reminiscences of their lost friends—for they were friends—friends to their country and their homes. How the words “starved white men” must have rung in their ears, and pity have blended with thankfulness that they had hitherto been preserved from sharing their sad fate!

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOX OBTAINS THE OBJECT OF HER VOYAGE.

TIDINGS had been gathered, through the Captain's researches, of one of the missing vessels; but there yet remained another to be accounted for, which fully determined him to carry out his previously projected scheme of sending three parties to search the surrounding coasts and countries. His crew were as excited and anxious as himself to bear a part in the exploration, and Dr. Walker would no longer be restrained, but begged to be sent some-

where or other. Captain M'Clin-tock, therefore, gladly availed himself of his valuable services, and sent him with a party to fetch provisions from a distant depot. Captain Young was also started on a similar errand to Fury Beach, to try and procure sugar. In due time the travellers returned with stores to the "Fox;" but Captain Young and his men had suffered severely during their journey homeward, or, rather, shipward. One of his sledges had broken down, and all of his packages and cargo had to be placed on the whole one, which, of course, added considerably to the weight

for the dogs to draw, who, always indolently inclined, would only pull over smooth places, and lay down whenever they came to any obstacle in their way; and in spite of whipping or coaxing, nothing could induce them to proceed until the sledge had been unladen and the goods carried past the obstruction. Then, to add to their troubles, the Captain, one of his men, and Samuel the Esquimaux, became snow-blind, so that the remaining man had to do all the work and direct the party.

On the 2nd of April, 1859, all arrangements having been complet-

ed, Captain M'Clintock and Lieutenant Hobson started on their exploring expedition. The Captain purposed proceeding to the Great Fish River, examining the shores of King William's Land going and returning; whilst Lieutenant Hobson was to explore the western coast from Gateshead Island. Captain Young was to start a few days after with his party, and trace the yet untraced part of the shore of Prince of Wales' Land, and examine between Four River Point and Cape Bird. Dr. Walker was again left in charge of the "Fox," five men remaining on board with him, the

others being members of the sledge parties. They started on their way in capital spirits, with flags flying from ship and sledges, and with dogs, the Captain tells us, "of all shapes and sizes." Each party had a sledge drawn by four men, besides a dog sledge and dog driver. Mr. Petersen, the interpreter, had volunteered to drive Captain M'Clin-tock's dogs—an offer which the Captain says, in his journal, was "too valuable to be declined."

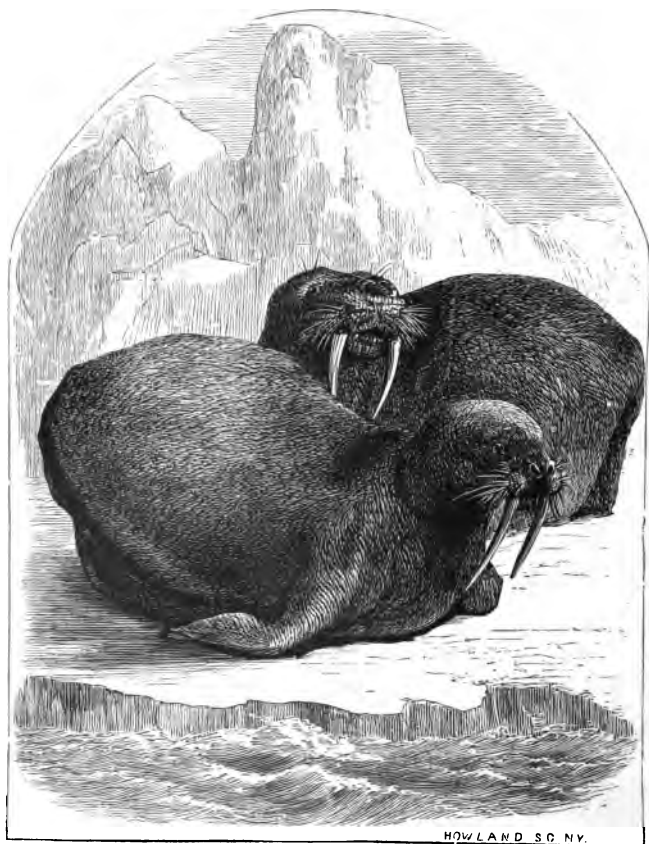
It was well that all were prepared for hardship and trials on their journey; for they suffered severely from the cold, their faces being blis-

tered, and their poor lips and hands chapped and cracked, from their fearful exposure to bright sunshine and bitter winds. But they proceeded bravely on, and towards the end of April, Captain M'Clintock fell in again with two of the families he had met with the preceding month. After many inquiries, he ascertained that two ships had been seen by the natives of King William's Island, and that one had sunk, as they had before stated, but that the other had been forced on shore by the ice, and from it they had obtained their wood. This information was elicited from a young

man, for the old one did not mention anything about the second vessel until the younger had accidentally made some remark which induced the Captain to believe they knew more than they chose to tell. Parting with these families, they again continued their route, Lieutenant Hobson's party leaving the Captain's to pursue their search along the western coast of King William's Land, whilst the Captain took a more southerly direction. To avoid snow-blindness as the spring advanced, they were obliged to travel by night, the glare of white being so much lessened by moonlight.

At one village the Captain was able to purchase of the natives six pieces of plate belonging to the missing expeditions, the pieces bearing the initials or crests of their previous possessors. These people told him that little remained of the wreck which had been forced on shore, as their countrymen had carried everything away they could. One old woman said she had visited the wreck during the winter of 1857 or 1858. She told Petersen that the white men dropped down dead as they went to the Great River, and that many of their bodies were found the next winter by the Esquimaux.

Having gathered all the intelligence these people were able to communicate, they again proceeded in a south-west direction, having been assured by this tribe that they would find another village a few days' journey from thence; but in this they were disappointed, as, upon reaching the expected spot, they only discovered one snow-hut upon it, and could get nothing out of its inhabitants, who seemed paralysed with fear at their appearance. They were evidently very well off, for all round their hut lay quantities of wood (a most unusual thing to see), and a huge pile of walrus and



reindeers' flesh, seals' blubber, and skins of various sorts. The walrus, or morse, is sometimes called the sea-horse; it is of the seal family, and is peculiar to northern seas. It is differently shaped about the head to the seal, and is not nearly so intelligent. The upper jaw of the walrus is furnished with two enormous tusks, which are sometimes two feet long, and which are used by the Esquimaux for spear heads and other purposes. They feed on marine plants, which they find at the bottom of the sea, and which, it is supposed, they use their tusks to root up; some naturalists think

they eat shell-fish as well as plants. The walrus is a capital swimmer, but an exceedingly awkward walker, and if attacked upon land, seldom escapes. A full-grown walrus weighs about 4,000 lbs.;—the skin is nearly an inch thick, and very tough. The walrus is chiefly sought after for its ivory tusks, and the quantity of oil it yields. Walruses are seldom met with alone; they live in families, or herds. When on shore, one acts as sentinel, and gives a signal if danger appears, when they plunge into or make for the sea as their safest element.

Being unable to glean further

tidings of their countrymen from these unsociable natives, the Captain and his party continued their journey, thoroughly investigating Montreal Island, and the south and south-east side of King William's Island ; but only a few pieces of iron and some tin cases were discovered upon the latter. Montreal Island and King William's, lie at the entrance of the Back, or Fish River. King William's Land (now Island), from the time of Sir James Ross naming it until Dr. Rae's journey, was considered a peninsula attached to the continent of North America ; but the latter gentleman discovered

an eastern passage, which determined it henceforth to be an island. This discovery was made after Sir John Franklin's expedition, and the knowledge of its existence would have been of great service to him. Having narrowly investigated the adjacent coasts, Captain M'Clin-tock commenced his return homeward on the 19th of May. We find his dogs had been a sad trial of patience to him, and that he willingly gave up his sledge to one of his men who was sick, and trudged on foot. It must have been very tantalizing, whenever the party came to a hummock of snow, or

stuck fast, to have all the little wretches lie down, looking thoroughly delighted, whilst all hands were obliged to exert themselves to extricate the sledges and set them free. Captain M'Clintock tells us, every cairn they met with was searched; every heap or cache examined, and every part of the coast and land explored by himself and party. What man could do, these brave men did; and praise and honour will be ever linked with their names. Pressing on towards Cape Herschel, the Captain hoped to find some record in that prominent situation, or at least a note

from Lieutenant Hobson, containing successful tidings. Every step he was then taking, he felt convinced, was in the route taken by his suffering countrymen, and his convictions were fearfully confirmed by his coming, on the night of the 25th of May, upon a human skeleton, the fragments of whose clothing, upon being examined, proved to be that of one of the missing crew. The Captain describes the skeleton to have been that of a young man above the common height, and from the braided sleeves of his jacket, and tie of his neckerchief, he considers he must have been a steward, or

one of the officers' servants. They found a clothes-brush and pocket-comb near him, and a pocket-book, with his clothing, which, of course, they carried away with them, hoping it might throw a light upon its owner; but at a future time, when dried, it crumbled to pieces with the touch. Having reached Cape Herschel, they discovered that some one had been before them, and that a large cairn built on this summit had been partially pulled down, and whatever had been deposited beneath it had been abstracted. This was a great disappointment to the little party; and not finding any

note from Lieutenant Hobson, considerably added to their anxiety. Journeying on about twelve miles from Cape Herschel, they came upon a small cairn, which, to their joy, proved to have been built by Lieutenant Hobson's party, and in it was a note, stating that he had been there six weeks previously, and that, having narrowly explored the coasts, he had not seen any vestige of wrecks; but he had found a record! Yes, Lieutenant Hobson had discovered an official record at Point Victory, on the north-west coast of King William's Island. But it was a sad, sad record, after

all. When first written, and placed under a cairn, about four miles from its future repository, it was signed by Lieutenant Graham Gore, and bore the welcome tidings, "All well"—that was in May, 1847. In April, 1848, the cairn had been reopened, and round the margin of the paper filled up by Lieutenant Gore, were written the melancholy facts that Sir John Franklin, Commander Gore, eight officers, and fifteen men, were dead, and that the surviving officers with their crew had been obliged to abandon their ships, and were making for Back's Fish River. This document had

been deposited under the cairn opened by Lieutenant Hobson, and had hitherto been undiscovered. Well might Captain M'Clintock write, "A sad tale was never told in fewer words."

On a piece of paper the size of half a sheet of foolscap, the first and last record of that melancholy expedition was written. It was a printed form, containing directions in six different languages, that whoever found it would forward it to the Secretary of the Admiralty; such forms being usually supplied to vessels on exploring expeditions. It had been first filled up and

signed by Graham Gore, but the additions round its margin had been subsequently made by Captains Crozier and Fitzjames. This valuable record is deposited, with numerous other relics of the missing crews, in the United Service Institution, by request of the Admiralty. A fac-simile is in Captain M'Clintock's journal. Short as the record is, from it, and the intelligence gathered by Captain M'Clintock of the wandering Esquimaux, there is not a doubt but that Admiral Sir John Franklin had discovered the long-sought-after North-West Passage, and had brought his ships

within 90 miles through it, to the known sea off the coast of America. As Captain M'Clintock justly remarks, "What must 90 miles have appeared to those brave men, who in two seasons had sailed over 500 miles of unexplored waters! How confident must they have felt that the forthcoming navigable season of 1847 would see their ships pass over so short an intervening space!" What a heart-sickening disappointment!—within 90 miles of the goal of their fondest hope, and yet that hope to be for ever unrealized by them! To see their noble and beloved leader taken from them before

the season for navigating Arctic seas had begun; and when it had arrived, to find themselves hopelessly beset with ice! Who can picture the sufferings of those men, who, brave to the last, "dropped down and died, as they retreated towards Fish River?" Not one escaped to tell of the privations, starvation, and suffering endured by his companions! In loneliness and destitution they passed from time into eternity, a solemn silence covering all their arduous anxious toils—a silence which will remain unbroken until the last Great Day, when He who saw and noted all their patience

and endurance shall bring the hidden things of earth to light.

Lieutenant Hobson's sad but valuable information induced Captain M'Clintock to spend several days, on his homeward route, in investigating parts unvisited by the Lieutenant, though provisions and fuel were running so short that they had to shoot their three puppies, and use the sledge they had drawn for firing; but nothing fresh was discovered. He visited the cairn where the record was found, and a large boat some miles from it. The boat was 28 feet long, and seven wide; she was mounted on a large heavy

sledge, for conveying her over the ice. The boat contained quantities of clothing and other useful articles, besides a few books, all devotional except the "Vicar of Wakefield." There were amongst the few books a Bible, and the covers of a New Testament and Prayer-book; the Bible had whole passages underlined, showing it had been well used. There were watches, spoons, forks, and many other valuable relics in that melancholy repository, which it made the heart sad to look upon. But oh! my young friends, there were sadder relics than those of silver and gold, and the perishing

things of time, in that boat, for it contained the remains of two of those brave men. Whether they had died of hunger, or from fatigue or disease, none can tell; but there they lay in their last earthly sleep—mouldering into dust, and awaiting the resurrection of the dead, and the life everlasting.

Leaving this sad spot, containing such strong evidence of the fate of the missing crew, Captain M'Clin-tock pursued his way homeward towards the "Fox." Another record having been found by Lieutenant Hobson upon the south side of Back Bay, which, however, af-

fording no additional information, the Captain turned aside to visit the cairn from whence it had been taken; there he found quantities of things strewn about, as if the retreating crews had cast them aside as useless, and impeding their journey. Poor fellows! their journey was for life; death was behind them, and on all sides; their only chance of escape was in pressing forward towards the Fish River, where perchance they might meet with some means of communicating with the Hudson's Bay Company. A chance—a bare chance, which none were permitted to realize.

Selecting (as he had previously done, from the boat and each cairn) such articles as were most valuable, and easiest to identify, the Captain again pressed forward; and the more hastily and anxiously, because a change of weather had taken place, and a thaw might come on before they could gain their little ship. No traces of natives had been discovered from the time they left Cape Herschel until they reached Wellington Strait, when they came upon a deserted snow village, happily for them, for the men were enabled to gather up enough fuel for their homeward journey. It was

quite evident that the places where they had met with the records and remains of their missing countrymen had been unvisited by the Esquimaux, or these wandering tribes would not have left a vestige behind them which could have formed a link in the chain of evidence so wondrously brought to light through the united efforts of the brave officers and crew of the little "Fox." For the last sixteen miles of their journey they were without their sledges, which neither they nor their dogs were able to pull any longer, and which they hid in a safe place; but on the 19th of June, after great

hardships and privations, the Captain and his small party arrived safely on board their little vessel. Lieutenant Hobson had reached it some days before, seriously ill—unable to walk, or even to stand. Captain Young had been obliged to return to the ship from illness, but had started off again as soon as he was somewhat recovered. The Captain says he “found everything on board clean and trim,” and the men well, except one, who had been out of health when he started. This poor fellow, Thomas Blackwell, ship’s steward, had died of scurvy; he had got into a desponding state,

refusing to take air or exercise, so that he could not stand against this disease peculiar to seafaring men. On the 28th of June, Captain Young's party arrived safely on board, though reduced in flesh, and very weak; they had been met with the day before by the Captain and some of his crew, who had gone in search of the dogs and sledges left behind them on their homeward journey. And now all the little company are on board the "Fox" once more, save the three who are sleeping in their Arctic graves; they have obtained the object of their hopes; they have discovered sad

but valuable mementoes of their lost countrymen. They possess a melancholy record of the missing crew; and now they have only to trim their vessel, and watch and wait for the breaking up of the ice to set them free. Can you not fancy how busy and happy the men were when the Captain issued orders for the painting of the "Fóx," and getting her ready for sailing? Can you not picture the good Doctor listening intently to his friends' recital of their privations and sufferings, whilst he examined a medicine chest brought from the boat, and drew out stopper after stopper from

the bottles, testing their contents? How tenderly and reverently would the officers label and put away the various articles brought from the boat and cairns, and gaze upon the underlines in the little Bible, wondering whose it was, and who had traced them! Then, perhaps, they would take up "Christian Melodies," with "G. G." on the cover, and talk of Graham Gore, its late possessor—for some of them might have known him—and with grateful hearts send up a silent thanksgiving to God for their own wondrous deliverance, whilst thoughts of home and joyous welcomes would make

them forget the hardships and trials they had just passed through. Blistered, frost-bitten faces, sore, aching limbs would be as nothing to them, now that the object of their search had been attained. Sad and melancholy as the tidings they had gathered were, yet they could justly anticipate glad and hearty greetings from their countrymen and friends. Of course, the first thing the exploring parties had to do was to try and get strong and well, and Captain M'Clintock tells us they attacked and consumed provisions as only men who have suffered from long fatigue and privation could. Those

who were able to get about amused themselves with shooting whatever was shootable, which, as before stated, was little enough. Sometimes Mr. Petersen and Christian would return with a duck or a goose, but very frequently their day's sport was unrewarded with success. From the Captain's journal we infer that no opportunity was lost for replenishing their larder, and that all parties were on the look-out for spoil; for we find that one day, when a fox and a glaucous gull were disputing over a trout which the gull had caught and brought to land, and which reynard

had seen and taken a fancy to, a sailor coming along, very quietly and satisfactorily to himself settled the matter by taking possession of the trout, which weighed two pounds, and coolly walking off with it, to the disgust of the gull and disappointment of the fox. The Arctic gull is much more fierce than our gulls, and is very ferocious and ravenous, even attacking the weaker of its own species; its bill is dark and very hooked; its plumage is of dark brown, or brown and white. It is found in the north of America, Europe, and Asia.

And now, having brought the

records and relics of the missing crews on board the "Fox," and heard that she is to be forthwith prepared for sea, we must leave her under the carpenter's and painter's hands, until the ice is sufficiently broken up for us to follow her in her homeward journey, in our next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FOX BIDS ADIEU TO PORT KENNEDY AND
BELLOT STRAIT, FOR "HOME, SWEET HOME."

ON Wednesday, August the 10th, about eleven o'clock in the morning, the little "Fox" steamed out of Brentford Bay, a S.W. wind having fortunately cleared a passage for her through the frozen waters. She had several times been obliged to shift her quarters during the past month, on account of the drifting ice, and once or twice had been in imminent danger of being wrecked; but, after many anxious hours spent in waiting and hoping, the ship's company

once more found themselves able to proceed on their way. But many were the difficulties they had yet to encounter ere they would be free to prosecute their homeward passage. The deaths of Mr. Brand and Robert Scott had deprived the tiny vessel of her engineers, so that the whole risk and toil of working her engines devolved upon Captain M'Clintock, who, of course, was totally unused to that sort of employment; but the man who had so bravely faced the dangers and unknown hardships of a two winters' sojourn in Arctic regions, was not likely to be daunted by a known

calamity, and set himself, with the help of his two stokers, to the task with unremitting zeal—such zeal, indeed, that we read he steamed out of Brentford Bay, passing by Long's Island and through Cresswell Bay in spite of every obstacle, working constantly at the engines for 24 hours. Well might he say he was glad to get into bed; and I am sure you will fully agree with me that he deserved a good long nap when he got there. We can readily enter into the delight of officers and crew when they took their last look at the coasts near Port Kennedy, and, with a sigh

of pity and regret, gazed upon the raised mounds, covered with Arctic flowers, which denoted the last resting-places of Mr. Brand and Thomas Blackwell (you will doubtless remember, Robert Scott was buried at Melville Bay), as they gradually receded from their sight. For eleven months had the little "Fox" harboured in Port Kennedy. The first six months, her company passed their time patiently waiting for the freezing over of the surrounding waters; and when they were frozen, in investigating the neighbouring islands and coasts, depositing stores for their spring journeys. Then,

when spring arrived, three months were spent in exploring the lands where their lost countrymen had wandered, and “dropped down and died” on their weary way ; and having gathered together every possible clue to their sad fate, they had returned to their dear little vessel to wait for the breaking up of that ice which they had so anxiously longed to surround them. Doubtless, the six weeks of waiting was their longest time of suspense, yearning, as they did, to behold their homes, and tell what success had crowned their efforts. During their eleven-months’ sojourn, only a few rein-

deer, seals, ducks, geese, lemmings, ermines, foxes, and gulls had been their occasional visitants, breaking the solemn stillness of the lifeless coast around them, for it was only many miles inland that the Esquimaux were met with by the exploring parties; and those who remained on board had never seen any living thing but themselves and the few solitary birds and animals which they so often vainly attempted to secure. I believe I have not told you that lemmings are about the size of a small rat; they are found in Polar regions, and are very inoffensive, living on vegetable matter,

and burrowing like a rabbit. Their hair is soft and long, of an ashy colour, with a darker tinge on the back. There is another species in Norway, which used to be held in superstitious awe by the natives, who believed they dropped from the clouds. The Norway lemmings migrate occasionally at times—not at regular periods, like most other migratory animals; and, descending by night in incredible numbers from the mountainous parts where they live, devastate the tract of country they pass through, devouring the herbage as they go over it so completely, that the land has the ap-

pearance of having been burnt. It has been computed that these migratory descents occur about every ten years, and are probably caused by scarcity of food in the haunts of the lemming, or by some instinct foretelling an unusually severe winter. Be the cause what it may, the Norwegians looked forward with anything but pleasure to their descent, and used to employ their clergy to exorcise their unwelcome visitors, believing them to be supernatural ones.

Having passed through Cresswell Bay, the crew of the "Fox" were fortunate enough to catch a

white whale, which proved a great treat to them; and they enjoyed whale steaks for dinner, which the Captain tells us were preferable to those of seal, and that not an ounce of this huge animal was thrown away, the meat being eaten, the skin preserved, and the oil put into two casks, containing twenty gallons each. A few days after the whale treat, the little company were regaled with roast veal, the aforesaid dainty being procured from two very young bears, who, with their mother, had swum up to the ship to investigate it, and lost their lives in their search after knowledge.

On Friday night, the 26th of August, the "Fox" steamed into Lieveley, or Godhavn Harbour, fourteen months having elapsed since she left it. Here a few letters were found awaiting the arrival of the officers, but only a few, for the severity of the season had precluded the whalers, by whom letters were sent, from communicating with Godhavn before going northwards. We can suppose the delight it must have been to receive letters from home after a two years' absence; and with what renewed hope they anticipated a speedy return to their native land.

The officers were hospitably welcomed by the resident Danish gentlemen, and the crew were equally well entertained by the Greenlanders, or Esquimaux. Every evening, after work, the sailors went on shore with a present of rum punch for the ladies, with whom they danced for several hours in a store thrown open for their use. Five days slipped rapidly by. The "Fox" had been cleaned and furnished, necessary supplies taken in, and Samuel and Christian discharged. We read that the regret of parting with the good-humoured Danes and Esquimaux was felt by all on board; they

had made themselves so useful, and had proved such cheerful companions, that the taking leave was painful to all parties. The very dogs appeared sorry to leave the little ship, and, having been put on shore, spent their time upon the rocks watching her, and howling piteously at not being able to return on board. On Thursday, the 1st of September, officers and crew bade farewell to Greenland, and in nineteen days arrived in the English Channel, reaching Portsmouth on the 21st of September. On the 27th, Captain M'Clintock assembled his crew for the last time on board the "Fox,"

and presented to all those who had not previously received it, the Arctic medal, in commemoration of their services in Arctic regions. Lieutenant Hobson was also informed that he was promoted to the rank of Commander. Such was the esteem the ship's company had for their Captain, that with their first money they bought a gold chronometer, and presented it to him as a token of their regard. The Captain alludes to the circumstance with much pride and feeling in his interesting journal.

I dare say my young readers will be glad to hear that, upon Mr.

Petersen's return to Copenhagen, he was honoured with the silver cross of Danebrog by his Sovereign. Lady Franklin was not unmindful of the brave men who had endured so much for the sake of her noble husband and his missing crews, and presented each of the sailors with a silver watch, in remembrance of her grateful appreciation of their devoted services. On each of the watches was engraved a representation of the pretty little "Fox," which had been their home during so many months, with a suitable inscription; and the man who had charge of the tiny vessel, when I saw her in

Southampton Docks, showed me her Ladyship's useful and valuable present with evident pleasure and pride.

The House of Commons voted the sum of £10,000, £2,000 of which provides a memorial statue of Sir John Franklin, to be erected in London, and the remaining sum of £8,000 has been distributed as a reward or gratuity among the officers and crew of the "Fox." The devoted wife of Sir John Franklin had the exceptional honour conferred upon her of the Founder's Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society, in

express recognition of her husband's discovery of the North-West Passage, and of the fact that she was the means of bringing that discovery to light.

Lady Franklin is the only woman who has ever received such an honour—one which she, however, well deserved, when we remember that for twelve years her efforts were unremitting in behalf of the missing expedition, and long after the faintest hope could exist that she would ever behold her noble husband. Private feelings appear to have been swallowed up in a desire for public good, and made her deter-

mine that the discoveries which the brave officers and crew of the "Erebus" and "Terror" had died to make, should not perish from the earth with them.

And now, my young friends, we have followed the little "Fox" in her explorations for two years and two months, and have proved the truth of the old saying, "Patience and perseverance will overcome all obstacles." We have also seen that large ends can be attained through small but continuous efforts. The "Fox" was but a tiny vessel, but she was manned by brave enduring men, ready to do or die; and,

with God's blessing crowning their endeavours, they were enabled to bring to light the knowledge of what others, equally brave, had died to achieve—the certainty that a North-West Passage really does exist; but also, under present circumstances, the equal certainty that it is unavailable. The question propounded 400 years ago has been at last painfully answered: it was solved by Sir John Franklin's expedition, but enveloped in the silence of death until brought to light by Sir F. L. M'Clintock and his crew. Those who discovered it lie sleeping in the midst of their

discoveries, "some buried—some not;" and, from their Arctic resting-place, in touching but unspoken language, crave a shrine for their memories in the hearts of their countrymen. Shall we not grant them that small but loving boon, and rank them amongst the heroes of our happy land? They died for the public good, as much as the soldier or sailor when fighting for his country. True, they did not perish by the hand of an enemy, but they sank beneath the bitter influences of cold and starvation, whilst striving to discover a more expeditious, and, consequently, a

more lucrative, way of passing from one part of the globe to the other—a way which, if feasible, would have been of incalculable benefit to mankind by advancing civilization, mercantile and scientific; and, dying in their efforts, we may fairly call them martyrs of science.

And now my story of the “Fox” is ended—a sad story, yet a true one. It has nothing but its truthfulness to commend it to your notice, and, unless the dogs or bears bring a smile upon your faces, I fear you will not have one good laugh all through it. I am sure though, when you are able to get Captain

M'Clintock's journal, you will both laugh and cry over that; for, beside its sad accounts, there are a number of funny, interesting anecdotes, which cannot fail to amuse you. If you are fond of dogs, you will find a good deal in it about the Esquimaux dogs, and a great deal about ice and icebergs, and other wonderful things. You will also have a full detail of the articles found in the boat, and scattered round the cairn, where the last sad record and relics of our missing countrymen were discovered; and then the pictures of the dear little "Fox" fast fixed in the ice, or threading her

way between blocks and floes of ice, with other marvellous appearances, cannot but deeply interest and affect you.

But, above all, my dear young friends, I would have you remember Him who so mercifully watched over the tiny vessel and her crew, and brought them safely through all their perils and dangers; and entreat you to study the Book of books, which alone can comfort in the time of sorrow. The underlined Bible in the lonely boat on the desolate King William's Island, speaks comforting words to you and me, for it tells us that He

who gave that word was with those poor, weary, hungry men; and when they closed their earthly eyes in the long sleep of death, they opened them spiritually in the clear light of eternity, to go no more out from the presence of their Lord, and are now waiting for their dear ones to join them in the land where there shall be "no more sea."

And now, farewell! We have followed the adventurous little "Fox" and her brave crew during her two years and two months' absence from English shores. Three of her small company we have left in their Arctic graves; but the re-

mainder we have seen brought safe to land, and find that their intrepid Captain has been worthily knighted by the Queen for his valuable services. The tiny "Fox" is now taking her ease, lying in Southampton Docks, an attractive object to strangers visiting that place; and the Franklin relics are safely deposited in the United Service Institution—a national memento of the lost expedition. And now, my dear young readers, what is the lesson we should learn from this true story? Even the old, old maxim, that duties are ours, results are God's. Then let us each en-

deavour to do our best, our very best, in the vocation whereunto we are called, and then we may fairly expect God will grant us His blessing.

S. T. C.

